

Communications Campaign Plan

Campaign Name: Virtual Parking Permits

Campaign type: Introduction of Virtual Parking Permits – change in service from paper permits

1. Background & Research

The Council is proposing to move away from paper permits to make them virtual for all new permit applications from May 2021. It is expected that all permits will be replaced by the virtual process by the end of April 2022.

The council currently operates a manual paper permit process for all types of permits that are either applied for online through individual service pages or via the 'My Havering Account'.

The only exceptions to this are internal permits for staff and Members that are applied by emailing Corporate Support services, and the School Street exemptions permit that are applied for by contacting the Highways, Traffic and Parking Control service.

As it is an operational change, the move is not subject to a public consultation.

Highways traffic and parking [HTP] services are proposing paper permits are replaced by virtual permits [MiPermit] and be provided by our contracted notice processing system supplier, Chipside.

Changing permits to a virtual system will make approximately £5k in savings annually and improve the efficiency of the service from HTP, customer services and the corporate support services. It will also improve the service for the customer/resident.

It is part of the Council's corporate plan for digital improvements to enhance the experience of self-service for customer/residents

Chipside also offer a telephone service to manage all calls and enquiries, which will also help to make the changes to the service efficient.

Cabinet members have been asked to agree recommendations to implement the virtual service for the following permits: business, carers, staff and public car park season tickets, critical duty, Havering clinical commissioning group, health and homecare service, Members, parking waivers, residents, school streets and vouchers.

2. Objectives

1 To inform residents, council staff, members and businesses of the change in the provision of the permits from paper to online [virtual] in advance

2 To promote the efficiency and improvement of what the new virtual service offers on various Council platforms so residents & others engage in this

3 To promote the new system as being a safe option during the current Covid-19 pandemic as well as an overall cost-saving option to benefit residents/others

4 To communicate how residents and other stakeholders can access the new system and receive support in doing so

3. Strategy

The overall campaign is to inform residents [customers], Members, council staff and businesses of the change from this service being of a paper form of permits to becoming virtual and becoming an easier and efficient online self-service.

It is to promote a more efficient and safer service – especially while in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, as accessing services online is safer than dealing with the permits in paper form.

It is to promote another service being more accessible online and using this as another platform to encourage more residents to use other services online.

To make sure messaging reflects the clear aspects of the change in the service and that communication is engaging to the stakeholder audience it is directed to.

4. Execution and implementation

- Website [press release on news page and info on dedicated page to parking permits] – https://www.havering.gov.uk/info/20005/parking_permits
- Social media: Facebook & Twitter & sharing with community group pages
- External media – local press: press release and messaging issued to Romford Recorder, Havering Daily, Time FM
- Living e-newsletter – [including Leader's blog]
- Internal newsletter [as to inform staff]
- Business Brief bulletin & other service e-bulletins [for informing businesses more directly]
- Lead cabinet member short video announcing the change in service [Cllr Osman Dervish]
- Sharing social media posts with contractor services [Chipside]

- Details included in any info on Council services in leaflets
- Paid for digital advertising [TBC]
- **Key messaging: [from HTP to customers / residents]**
- Your parking permit is changing from paper to virtual – see how this will provide a more efficient service for you – <https://www.mipermit.com/>
- We're moving away from paper based permits to a virtual permits so we can provide a better service for you
- Virtual parking permits will help improve your ability to manage your own permits and give you more control over your parking choices online and make it more efficient for you
- You will be asked to change to a virtual parking permit once your existing paper permit has expired. Remember you can change in advance, so you are not left without a valid permit
- We're changing the way we issue parking permits to make our process safe and easier
- We currently issue 100,000 paper permits every year. By changing to virtual permits we are making it easier for residents & staff by removing the need to display it in their vehicle windscreen and helping to prevent risk of parking permit fraud
- Remember when you had to get a tax disc to display in your vehicle windscreen? How much easier is it to just pay and update it online now! We're doing the same with our parking permits, no more paper but going virtual instead

5. Evaluation

- Number of people who have converted
- Overall coverage in internal and external newsletters to stakeholder audiences
- Likes, clicks & overall engagement of how the info was received on social media platforms by audiences
- Metric information from clicks on articles in e-newsletter bulletins
- Gathering feedback from general comments by those affected [if any]
- Gathering feedback via service reports of how the change in service has worked/not worked

Risks and mitigation?

- Negative feedback from residents who are not online and can't access online services easily or via mobile phones [may ask for choice]
- Online technical issues causing delay in applying for permits and risk being fined for parking and not having permit processed in time
- Audience not having received proper notification by either email or post in time for when the services changes
- Communication restricted to just online as Council buildings such as libraries may still be closed as per the pandemic so no info can be posted in these venues [for those customers who are not online and would usually pick up info in these venues]
- Some issues as per the virtual system being rolled out over the following 12 months from May 2021 when there will be a combination of paper and virtual permits in operation until the end of April 2022.

TIMELINE GRID FOR COMMUNICATIONS

20 January 2021 – report goes to cabinet

10 February – goes to cabinet meeting for recommendations to be agreed

March to promote ahead of change in service from May

1 May – new and renewal paper parking permit applications to change to virtual

[More will be added to schedule]

FAQs [compiled by HTP mainly for Council staff]

What is being proposed?

Highways, Traffic and Parking Control are proposing to change all types of existing paper permits to a virtual solution for both internal and external customers.

The virtual solution proposed is called MiPermit provided by Chipside Ltd.

What is MiPermit?

MiPermit is an online solution for all permits that improves the customer experience by enabling self-service giving you the customer full control over your permits.

This means you can renew or make changes such as updating your vehicle from your phone or online at your convenience. Any changes you make are made in real time and are effective immediately.

How do I get MiPermit?

MiPermit is an app you can download from Google Play or the iPhone App Store, or alternatively you can register online to create and administer your account.

If you do not have a smart phone and have no internet access at all, it is possible for Chipside to set up and administer your account on your behalf over the phone.

How does it affect me? [member of staff]

If you have a staff parking permit for any of the car parks you will need to register for MiPermit before renewing. You will no longer be given a paper permit by the Corporate Support team to display in your windscreen the next time you renew.

When will it happen?

All new staff parking permit applications from the 1st May 2021 will be done through the MiPermit app only. All existing permits with an expiry date later than this date will still be valid up until the date of their expiry and must be displayed in your vehicle.

You will be required to change to MiPermit when your existing paper permit expires. You can do this in advance of the expiry date to ensure you are not left without a valid permit.

How will parking officers know I have a permit?

Parking officers will be alerted by their handheld devices you have a valid permit when checking your registration number. This works in the same way as cashless parking does when a customer parks in a Council car park and purchases a parking session through the RingGo virtual solution.

Does this mean I have to pay more?

Moving away from a paper based permits to a virtual solution will not increase any permit prices, including staff permits. It will however improve the customer's ability to manage their own permits and give them more control over their own parking choices.